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Parisis, Pierre Louis, Bp.

Monsignor Parisis on Catholic
journalism.

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MONSIGNOR PARISIS

ON

CATHOLIC JOURNALISM

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Parisis, Pierre Louis, Ep.

MONSIGNOR PARISIS ON CATHOLIC JOURNALISM.

[THERE are few subjects of greater practical importance and delicacy at the present day than the position, duties, and rights of Catholic journalists. Many of our readers must often have turned their thoughts to the subject, and have probably felt with ourselves the difficulty of exactly defining the limits which Catholic orthodoxy and discipline prescribe to the exercise of the powers possessed by the periodical press,—powers so pregnant for good or for evil, and to which a certain homage is paid, and a certain recognition incessantly granted, even by those who are most jealous of their exercise, and most anxious to restrain them within the closest possible limits.

It has occurred to us that we shall be doing some service to the cause of Catholic order and charity, if we offer to our readers the sentiments of one of the most able, most fair, and most respected of the French episcopate, on this difficult and momentous subject. While Bishop of Langres, Monsignor Parisis, in his *Cas de Conscience*, entered into the question of Catholic journalism with all his usual candour and vigour of thought; and though his remarks have a special bearing on French affairs, yet they embody so lucid an exposition of the principles on which Catholic journalism should be every where conducted, that they cannot be read without profit by all Catholics. They have further this great advantage, that they bear no reference to any thing which has ever taken place on this side of the Channel, and therefore cannot be taken as applying to any individual amongst ourselves. Without further prologue, therefore, we lay before our readers the following translation.]

I. Points on which the rights and duties of journalists are certain, and in a manner unrestricted.

First, then, we may say that religious journalism has the undoubted right of drawing attention to whatever in any publication is formally contrary to Christian faith and morality, whether such publication be the work of an individual or come

out under the sanction of the state. Thus, for instance, the Catholic journals have been perfectly justified in those continual and vigorous attacks which they have directed against the University. Whenever there is real ground for these attacks, they may in all good conscience be publicly made, and sometimes even *ought* to be so. If, for instance, attempts have been made to tamper with the faith of youth, either on the part of individual professors or by means of the University books, and all endeavours to remedy this evil by other means have failed, it becomes the duty of the religious journal to denounce such proceedings to families; although being a question of orthodoxy it belongs more essentially to the Church, for we are here speaking only of cases where error undoubtedly exists.

Now if journalism has the right to undertake the defence of our dogmas when assailed in public institutions, how should you withhold from it the liberty of discussing and maintaining them against the writings of private individuals? This is the very end of its existence, and, if we may venture to say it, the object of its mission. On this point there is room for neither doubt nor controversy.

Thus, every writer who presumes to attack the truths of faith, to throw suspicion or ridicule upon its institutions and practices, and to thwart the ministrations of its priests, nay who even unintentionally diverges from the true doctrine of the Church, by that circumstance alone justly falls under the censure of the Catholic journal. At the same time, it is the duty of the journalist to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the matter of which he has to treat in combating error; and indeed it is a great advantage for all that he should be thus obliged to make such subjects his study, as we shall presently see; besides which it is his duty practically to give due weight to prudential considerations, and to choose his opportunity with discretion; but of this we shall speak presently; what we wish now to insist upon is, that the right itself is incontestable. A simple layman may in all good conscience assail such writers; he may criticise not the matter alone, but even the form, in order the better to render such works distasteful to their readers: for where these publications obtain an entrance into families, they may be looked upon as real domestic foes, wolves entered into the sheep-fold; and you know it is a charity to cry "wolf" when he has got among the sheep. All this may be applied with still wider latitude in the case of parliamentary orators who display their hostility to our religion.

For a similar reason journalists may review Catholic works,

in order to examine their merits and comment upon them, and to discuss the points of dogma, morality, or discipline of which they treat. As long as they do this quite in an abstract manner, without personal allusions, it is impossible to deny them the right, provided always they adhere to sound doctrine, of instructing and edifying their readers. To say that in so doing they intrude into the pastoral office, is a frivolous charge, and such as no one would attempt to advance in so many words.

But the objection is brought forward in another shape: persons cry out against the abuses resulting from journalists handling these questions; abuses which they assert to be so frequent, and indeed so utterly unavoidable, that the mischief that is caused outweighs all possible advantage. They maintain that the majority of writers who take upon themselves to publish so-called religious articles, not having gone through any theological study, are always in danger of compromising the great truths of faith, to the serious injury of religion. It is further said, that journalists always prefer selecting questions of present interest, and by mixing up personal remarks with discussions in themselves of an abstract character, call up new adversaries to the holy cause, of which they are the supposed defenders. Finally, it is asserted, and particular stress is laid upon this point, that most of the religious questions which at the present day interest the public, for whom journalists write, are much more of a practical than of a speculative character; that many of them are subjects of controversy among the priests, and even among the bishops themselves; that some are of a very perplexing and delicate nature; and that when laymen come to embroil matters still further by intruding their opinions, taken up after little reflection and often violently expressed, they can but injure the Church, without benefiting her in any way.

Such, in substance, are the objections advanced against religious journalism; and they are very loudly urged and very seriously felt by persons entitled to much respect. In the succeeding paragraph we shall examine that portion of these objections to which an unqualified answer cannot be given; but as we are now speaking only of undoubted rights and duties, it may be sufficient to make the following remarks in reply.

1. The abuse of a right does not destroy its existence. Now it is certain that every Catholic possesses the right to repel known error by such means as he thinks best, and to profess his faith by his writings, whenever he judges such a course to be beneficial to himself or to others, unless the Church positively imposes silence on him.

2. In combating error, as well as in setting forth the truth, laymen ought to lend their assistance when the clergy do not suffice for the work. Now it is certain that at the present day the clergy could not undertake to edit all present and future religious journals, of which moreover, considering the actual state of public feeling, it would be out of the question for them to assume the whole moral responsibility.

3. Ignorance in religious matters, and indifference, its inevitable result, are undoubtedly the two great plagues of our day. Now it is certain that in the present state of things there is nothing better calculated, in the long-run, to remedy the evil in the masses of the population than religious journalism. Without it, the greater number of Catholic questions would no longer be even mooted in the world, whereas in consequence of its existence they are necessarily studied; in the first instance by the lay editors, who may probably make a few blunders at starting, but who, needing as they do the countenance of the clergy, will soon take care to make themselves competently acquainted with such subjects; they will be studied, in the next place, by the lay subscribers to these journals, who, generally speaking, would never have the resolution to open a theological work, but who will willingly give their attention to some occasional theological discussion introduced into the columns of a journal; they will even be studied by lay writers inimical to religion, who being sometimes under the necessity of engaging in dispute with the religious periodicals, would expose themselves to the mortification of making gross mistakes if they did not study their adversaries' doctrines.

The natural and inevitable result, then, of religious discussions in Catholic journals, is to draw all minds towards some species of study of our holy doctrines. Now when we reflect that it is the absence of this study, and the repugnance with which it is regarded, which has caused France to fall into the degrading darkness of materialism; when we say to ourselves, deeply feeling the truth of what we say, that religion needs only to be known, because if there be but real sincerity of heart, knowledge leads to love, and love to practice,—can any one wonder that we should encourage with all our might so powerful a means offered to us by divine Providence for the moral and Christian regeneration of the people?

It is asserted that many evils attend religious journalism. Who questions it? Every thing in this wretched world has its evils; but what are these inconveniences of detail compared to the immense advantage which results? Can we purchase so great a benefit too dearly? Besides, we may be sure of one thing: if this journalism is encouraged by lawful authority,

practice will diminish the evils, and by practice also its beneficial fruits will become more abundant and precious. All things here below ripen in the end; and every one may have remarked how much certain Catholic journals have lately gained in moderation, talent, knowledge, and weight.

II. Upon what points these rights and duties are uncertain or restricted.

We are now arrived at the most delicate part of the question, and may clearly perceive that we are placed between two dangers of considerable magnitude.

On the one hand, to permit lay journalism to intrude and declaim within the very sanctuary; this would be to authorise a manifest irregularity, possibly even sacrilegious in its character. On the other hand, to deny sincere and fervent Catholics all active share in a battle which our enemies not unfrequently proceed to wage against us, so to say, upon the very steps of the altar; this would, perhaps, be to betray the interests of religion in another direction.

The safest course, no doubt, would be that religious journals should be called to this pious work by the bishops, and in every thing be directed by those to whom alone it was said, "*Euntes docete.*" But then the whole responsibility of the journal would fall upon the bishops; the bishops would be its directors, and almost its chief editors, which, at least under present circumstances, is utterly impossible.

If, then, religious journalism does not receive the power of discussing what properly appertains to the government of the Church by any express and canonical mission, it must hold such power either in virtue of some tacit concession or by natural right; for our Lord having exclusively and personally charged the bishops with the office of directing the Church of God, none else can, without the guilt of usurpation, interfere in this function, especially if it be for the purpose of criticising or obstructing its exercise, unless he can plead in his justification some right or other real and sufficient.

Now we will say at once, it is impossible to deny but that this right does exist in certain cases, nay may even become on occasions an imperative duty: for instance, if (which God forbid!) the pastor of the flock, the bishop himself, should swerve from the right path in his direction of it; if he were evidently taking the road towards schism, and it had consequently become necessary to resist his commands under pain of incurring the risk of divine reprobation. Such cases, although rare, may happen; but as in such conjunctures no doubt can possibly exist, it is not with them that we are at present concerned.

For clearness' sake, let us enter into a few details, and

consider what right of interference may be conceded to journalists in respect to, 1. the choice of pastors; 2. the matter of divine worship; 3. certain controverted questions of discipline.

ART. I. *Of the Choice of Pastors.*

All the pastors of the second order being nominated by the bishop, who is their superior by divine right, we cannot see on what legitimate title journalism can interfere in the matter of their choice, in the way either of suggestion or of blame, or by the exercise of any influence through the press calculated to hamper the free determination of ecclesiastical authority; all the faithful enjoying, it must be remembered, the power of communicating to that authority any information they may deem useful.

But is the interference of publicists equally prohibited in regard to the nomination of the bishops, which is in the hands of the government?

Abuse in this matter being very possible, and liable to become seriously prejudicial to the interests of religion, it is evident that the right to raise a warning voice belongs to whatever power can best exercise it, and much more to the only power that can exercise it. Now what is this power? It is pre-eminently, both *de jure* and *de facto*, the Holy See, since it alone confers canonical institution, without which the nomination of the State is nugatory; but it is not the custom of the Holy See to reject, and indeed it cannot in prudence reject, these official nominations, except in cases where some canonical irregularity would ensue. Now, at the present day especially, may not many other reasons exist for dreading, as a public calamity, the elevation of certain ecclesiastics to a post of such importance as the episcopate? Thus, notorious levity of conduct, absence of zeal, excessive weakness of character, habitual subserviency to those in power, especially where such is the result of system,—all these considerations united, or even taken singly, may they not constitute titles to political preference, while, on the other hand, they are so many reasons for alarm and dislike in a religious point of view?

Who can prevent such disastrous nominations, particularly when they are the consequence of a continual bias and deliberate calculation on the part of government? One power alone is able to do this—*opinion*. And who shall rouse opinion, and make it sufficiently formidable to restrain the designs of the supreme power, defeat its plans, and even force it to abandon the resolutions it has formed? One means alone—*publicity*. And what organ can sufficiently interest the public mind in

questions of so purely spiritual a nature, and make them appreciable by the world, which bestows so little thought on such matters? One only—the *journalist*.

No doubt his duty is an anxious one; for if, on the one hand, he has reason to fear that by keeping silence he will be allowing the evil to occur; on the other, he has reason to dread lest he should aggravate the mischief, or compromise the good cause, by speaking inopportunately.

We therefore conjure Christian publicists to give special heed on such occasions to our former general recommendations as to the disinterestedness, purity of intention, prudence, and all those other moral qualities which they ought to consider as the peculiar obligations of their calling.

But all these essential conditions once observed (and they cannot be too strongly urged, particularly under circumstances of so serious a nature), journalism not only may, but is, almost in every case, bound to make its voice heard; and so much the more, that these public representations would be directed, not against the Church or its rulers, but against the secular power, in order to counteract its pernicious anti-religious tendencies displaying themselves in the exercise of that which ought to be regarded as the most sacred and highest of privileges.

ART. II. *Of the matter of Divine Worship.*

Divine worship, even in its exterior and sensible acts, is from its very object essentially spiritual and sacred; hence it eludes all purely human authority; and, apart from such concessions as the Church may have made, those governments which have attempted to control and regulate it, no matter in what particular, have undoubtedly been guilty of an abuse of power more or less partaking of a sacrilegious character.

Now what the rulers of the nation may not do, it is plain that neither can journalism do. It possesses, then, no right to meddle with the matter of divine worship, because that is the exclusive province of the Church. Nevertheless, in the matter of divine worship there is, 1. a department in which the Church has never laid down any definite rules, and which, saving some general recommendations, she gives up to the taste, often merely arbitrary, of the age, nation, nay of the individual; 2. even in that which has been the subject of ecclesiastical regulations, there remain certain controverted points, where consequently no clear duty can be said to exist.

And first with reference to what is arbitrary, we cannot see what need hinder journalism from expressing an opinion; and

next with regard to controverted points, we think that without giving itself full latitude, it may discuss the subject, at least in some of its bearings, provided it never ventures into the domain of religious authority, over which, as we said, it possesses no right. Some details upon these two points may not be without their practical utility.

Although there be certain general principles connected with the essentials of Catholic worship, which affect the form of churches, the ornaments of the altar, the chanting of God's praises, &c., principles which on that account it is not allowable either to depart from or to censure, it cannot be denied that on all these points there are many details upon which the Church has never canonically decided, and with regard to which, for that very reason, every one is entitled to adopt whichever side he pleases. Thus every publicist is at liberty to take part in those public contests which, at the present day, the partisans of Grecian and of Gothic architecture, the amateurs of modern music and of plain-chant, and the admirers of religious symbolism and its depreciators, carry on against each other. The Church abandons all these questions to what Scripture calls the "dispute of men," to which the Creator has given up the whole world.*

Our decided opinion on this question is well known; and it is this very opinion, the fruit of reflection and study, which makes us desire to see a daily increase in the number of those who discuss each side of religious questions. Undoubtedly it is highly probable that in the course of these discussions persons will be guilty of rude and unbecoming remarks, which we shall be the first to visit with the strongest censure; but we repeat once more, that these evils, which are altogether accidental, ought to count for nothing in comparison with the advantages which result from the study of religious matters, even in what is purely external. It is true that a man does not become a perfect Christian merely by studying the works of Christianity; nevertheless it is very certain that this study naturally leads to Christian thoughts and convictions, and even to the formation of Christian habits.

Seeing that, during the last 300 years, faith has ever languished and dwindled in proportion to the loss of taste for Catholic forms and the understanding of them, why may we not hope that the revival of zeal for these long-neglected studies will prepare better days for faith? There is no difficulty, then, with respect to what is arbitrary.

2. But there are other portions of external worship on which the Church has actually legislated, but which are, never-

* *Mundum tradidit disputationi eorum. Eccl. iii. 11.*

theless, the subject of theoretical controversies occasioned by variations in practice. Since there are laws existing on these points, the only question is that of their interpretation. Now has journalism any right to discuss this interpretation? What are we to think, for instance, of its interference in the matter of the liturgy?

It must be confessed that journalism ought here to be confined within much closer limits than in any of the previous instances. However, is it so certain that we may not, even in this purely spiritual matter, admit it to a modest and legitimate share in the dispute?

Without, in the first place, noticing that the form of churches, the ornaments of the altar, the style of sacred chanting, and other points whereon there is perfect freedom of opinion, are all connected with the liturgy, we may say that there are, even in what relates to the sacred words employed in public worship, certain studies, and certain opinions the result of these studies, which the Church has never discouraged; studies on the origin and history of the several liturgies, and opinions with regard to the motives which influenced the different authors, and the peculiar character, as regards both art and orthodoxy, which they have stamped upon them. We cannot see that any publicist, who limits himself to this entirely historical and speculative examination, encroaches on the province of the Church.

But here we are met by a repetition of what has been already urged, that as journals live wholly by what may be called questions of present interest, these liturgical discussions have always practically, and at the present time especially, their personal application, and imply some very intelligible criticism on the administration of certain dioceses; that this evil being inevitable and of a very serious nature, and the benefit resulting from the introduction of liturgical discussions into the pages of a journal being very trifling and doubtful, it would be much better to keep total silence both on these points and on many others, and to leave each bishop to follow the course which circumstances either permit or force upon him. This objection leads us to the third point which we wish to examine.

ART. III. *Of certain present Questions of Discipline.*

The liturgy is not the only subject at the present day of eager and sometimes dangerous controversy within the Church. Discussions with respect to the immovability of parish priests, or the re-establishments of certain offices, or the arbitrary

power of bishops, have been raised, and that not without exciting storms and causing scandal. But, first, while we condemn as severely as they deserve these scandalous attacks upon the most legitimate authority in the world, may we not say that they did not arise out of journalism, but would have taken place as well without it as with it? However unfortunate, however blamable they may have been, do they not belong to that class of scandals which our Lord has told us are inevitable, not because the human will is subjected to any fatal necessity, but because the powerful concurrence of circumstances renders them in a manner unavoidable? History furnishes us with frequent instances of this at the rise of all the great heresies. Journalism, then, is not the source of these scandals.

But because these questions are of an exciting nature, and have been more or less envenomed by the passions of men, does it follow that religious journalism cannot discuss them without sharing these faults, and without falling into the errors of those whose intemperate language has caused all the bitterness of feeling that exists? We think not. We are of opinion, it is true, that considering the state to which things have been brought, these irritating questions ought to be treated with great circumspection; that, far from speaking in a bold and dogmatising way, the journalist ought to fear lest he should not be sufficiently conversant with his subject, especially in its practical application; and that instead of fanning the flame of discontent in unruly and impatient minds, it is his duty before all things to declare himself in favour of moderation, and of pure and simple obedience while the question remains unsettled.

But when once these precautions have been sincerely adopted, we think that it is not expedient that the conscientious organs of genuine Catholic opinion should absolutely keep silence amid controversies of a grave and perhaps decisive character, which, if not handled by the faithful, will certainly be taken up by others, and those the enemies of religion.

Ah! if these important matters could be secretly arranged in each diocese by the proper authorities, we should have no hesitation in telling publicists that they have no right to meddle with the discussion of them; but this is not the case. Whether we will or not, these matters at the present day are made the subject of public discussion; a fact which our enemies will turn to their own advantage, by the help of lying and misrepresentation, unless we avail ourselves of it to forward the cause of truth and justice.

Let religious journalists begin, therefore, by studying these questions thoroughly; let them then proceed to treat them

prudently and modestly, as necessity requires, if it were only for the purpose of dissipating unjust prejudices, and defeating malicious designs. If they act thus, they will often be of real assistance to the heads of the Church, by preparing public opinion for measures which otherwise could not be brought to bear.

But when, on the other hand, the Catholic writer encounters in his lawful pastors not only opinions and leanings, but positive decisions which are opposed to his own personal convictions, oh, then let him give good heed to follow the Apostle's advice, and listen long, listen much, and speak only when it is no longer possible to avoid speaking. Let him remember that there ought always to be a presumption in favour of our spiritual rulers; that owing to their peculiar studies, daily experience, and the grace of their vocation, they receive an abundance of light, of which the faithful in general are in a great measure devoid; and that if in controverted questions obedience is no longer a rigorous duty, it is always, at least in the first instance, the wisest and safest course.

If, however, after having long studied, meditated, taken counsel, and prayed, a Catholic believe it to be his duty before God to engage publicly in a religious discussion, and to adopt a line opposed to that of his bishop, he ought to tremble at the very obligation which his conscience lays upon him, and, after the example of that holy man Job, fear even his holiest and purest works.* Let him then more than ever guard his language with that circumspection which the prophet-king asked of God;† let him, by the respectful modesty of his representations, render less offensive what, apparently at least, is always contrary to order,—resistance to superiors, and especially spiritual superiors. Let him, in fine, remember that priests, and still more bishops, are always, in the hierarchy of the Church, likened unto “ancient men,” before whom a feeling of respect teaches us to rise,‡ and of whom it is said that we must never “rebuke” them, but that all which is allowable is that when necessary we should “entreat” them “as” we entreat “a father.” *Seniorem ne increpaveris, sed obsecra ut patrem* (1 Tim. v. 1).

Let us here bring our difficult task to a conclusion, summing up in two passages from holy Scripture both our advice and our encouragement to all the editors of Catholic journals. “Brethren,” writes St. Paul to the Philippians (chap. iv. 8), “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever

* Verebar omnia opera mea. *Job* ix. 28.

† Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiæ labiis meis. *Psal* cxi. 3.

‡ Coram cano capite consurge et honora. *Lev.* xix. 32.

just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, let these things be in your thoughts," in your conversation, and in your writings. Such is our advice.

This being well understood and agreed upon, we will say to them, in accordance with the advice of the same apostle, "Catholic brethren, let there be amongst you a holy and lively emulation for the diffusion and defence of divine truth; let all men of energy and talent lend their assistance in this glorious ministry; let us 'forbid no one to prophesy.' Never will truth have too many organs, as long as 'all things be done decently and according to order'" (1 Cor. xiv. 39, 40). Such is our encouragement; and we believe we have thus fully answered the last question proposed.

May this declaration of our good wishes and expression of our sympathy have the effect of making religious journalism more and more a docile and powerful auxiliary in the cause of holy Church!

We add, in conclusion, the following passage from the same work:

Men say to you, "You have no mission." No, doubtless you have no mission to sit in a council, any more than you have to take a direct share in the doctrinal decisions of the *Ecclesia dispersa*; there can be no question about this; and the simple layman, however learned or talented he may be, can never be more than a humble disciple in the Church of God. But if you have not the mission of apostles, you have that which is common to all Christians, who are bound, according to the measure of the grace which they have received, to labour for the spread of the kingdom of God, the edification of their brethren, and the defence of the treasure of faith. Does not St. Paul himself tell us, "that even among the body of the faithful each man receives the communication of the Holy Spirit for the profit of all"? (1 Cor. xii. 7.) You have no mission! But when, at the commencement of the second century, Saint Justin, a layman and philosopher of the school of Plato, headed in a learned treatise the list of apologist Fathers, and thus obtained from the Emperor Antoninus an edict suspending persecution, did the bishops dispute his right to consecrate his talents to the defence of the Church? When Athenagoras addressed his *Apology for Christianity* to Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus; when Clement of Alexandria published his *Exhortation to Pagans*, and his learned *Stromata*; when Arnobius, as yet but a simple catechumen, put forth his book *Against the Gentiles*, did it occur to any one to tell them they had no

mission? When great dangers threaten, as Tertullian beautifully expresses it, does not every citizen become a soldier? "*In reos majestatis et publicos hostes omnis homo miles est.*" Has not every one of the faithful a mission to fight, according to his ability, against the enemies of God?

And does not modern history furnish us with similar examples? When in our day a De Maistre, a Bonald, a Châteaubriand, have so splendidly established the dominion of Christianity in the reign of politics, philosophy, science, letters, and art, has their secular position in the Church in any way detracted from the merit of their writings? has it not rather enhanced their claims on the gratitude of Catholics?

It is true that laymen, who seldom make a close and systematic study of theology, and are more exposed to the influence of worldly notions, the invariable tendency of which is to corrupt the purity of divine truth, are consequently bound to practise greater circumspection; but this danger, while it increases their responsibilities, in no wise diminishes their rights. The Church, while she gives her blessing to their endeavours, still reserves to herself the right of pronouncing on their works, and of pointing out, when needful, the alloy which may be mixed with the pure gold in their writings. Thus she respectfully preserves in her libraries, along with the writings of the holy Fathers, the *Divine Institutions* of the layman Lactantius, regretting at the same time that the theological language of that work should not be every where unexceptionable; thus she preserves with the same care the erudite discourse of the layman Tatian *Against the Gentiles*, at the same time condemning the wild errors of the head of the Encratites; and the Church deals in like manner with our modern Tatians and Lactantiuses. Wherever the freedom of the press exists, she allows them to write upon their own responsibility, reserving to herself the power of passing judgment on them afterwards. Moreover, in this respect priests stand exactly on the same ground as laymen; and after all it is by no means the case that all hierarchs have been simple laymen. No special mission then is needed in order to write or act in favour of religion, particularly when it is assailed; all that is requisite is a thorough understanding of the holy cause the defence of which is undertaken. It is plain, therefore, that laymen may act now, as they have always acted, subject to this condition.

Now comes the question, Is it their duty? That is to say, is lay co-operation useful? Is it necessary to the Church of France in those serious debates in which we find ourselves engaged, and of which we can foresee no speedy conclusion? Absolutely necessary it cannot, of course, be said to be. The

Church is God's work; and it is plain that God, strictly speaking, stands in no need of man's aid to accomplish his work. However, saving always in the case of miraculous interposition, which can be considered only as a splendid exception in the order of Providence, it is certain that God makes use of secondary causes to accomplish the end He has in view. Now, confining ourselves to the ordinary way by which the Church is led, we do not hesitate to say that the co-operation of good and faithful laymen is always necessary in France; and can this be matter of doubt, when we remember that, humanly speaking, all its interests are canvassed, and its destinies discussed and decided, in those very assemblies in which the clergy have no seat, and in quarters which their remonstrances can barely reach, or reach only to be disregarded?

Now, whenever a layman's silence or inaction would lend a tacit encouragement to the progress of evil, it is no longer his right only, but it is his sacred duty, to speak and act; by holding his peace he would become a prevaricator—he might even incur the guilt of an accomplice; and when the ruin of religion in a great kingdom is the matter at stake, such connivance is a tremendous sin even in the sight of men, much more before God.

[Extracted from the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, September 1850.]

KATE GEAREY; OR, IRISH LIFE IN LONDON.

CHAPTER I. *The "Gracians."*

IT was on a bright spring day in the year 1849, the very zenith of a London season, that a group of trampers, or "Gracians" (as the Irish themselves style them), were congregated at the mouth of one of the courts in the western end of London. The mouth of this same court, or buildings as it was termed, opened into a short fashionable street, forming a communication between Oxford Street and — Square: the court itself was not ten doors from the square, yet probably not one of the inhabitants of the latter had ever even bestowed a furtive glance on the dismal-looking passage, where so many hundreds of their fellow-creatures were immured. The court bore, and still bears a bad name, and as such is known to many; yet I





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